

Good morning, Chairman Perry and members of the committee. My name is Tom Sapp and I am an official court reporter for the district court in Kalispell. I'm here today to ask for your support of Senate Bill 197.

As you have heard, the last increase of the page rate was in 1983, thus an attorney or litigant ordering a transcript today is paying the same rate that was billed out when I was a senior in high school.

As an official court reporter I am employed by the State to make a verbatim record of all district court proceedings. In Kalispell I work for three extremely busy judges with heavy caseloads, and often the majority of my work week is spent in the courtroom. When a transcript is ordered it is usually completed after work hours and often on weekends. Yes, we are compensated for that additional work time, but at a rate that was established in 1983. Today we are using technology and equipment, the cost of which was unheard of when this issue was last addressed. In 1983 a Smith Corona typewriter and a box of carbon paper were the means of producing a transcript.

For this reason and the others stated by my fellow reporters, I believe this bill will bring us closer to closer to a 2009 rate, and I would respectfully urge your support of Senate Bill 197.

Thank you for your time this morning.

Tom Sapp, Court Reporter